

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3 – 8, 11, 12, 14, 18 – 20 and 22 - 24 are pending in the application. Claims 2, 9, 10, 13, 15 - 17, 21 and 25 – 27 are canceled, wherein claims 25 – 27 are canceled by the present amendment. Applicants are requesting entry of the present amendment, and reconsideration of the present application.

Applicants note with appreciation that the Examiner has indicated that claims 25 – 27 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. The application contains three independent claims, namely claims 1, 12 and 20. Rather than rewrite claims 25 – 27, **Applicants are rewriting claims 1, 12 and 20 to include relevant recitals from claims 25, 26 and 27, respectively, thus placing claims 1, 12 and 20 in condition for allowance.**

In the Office Action, claims 1, 3 – 8, 11, 12, 14, 18 – 20 and 22 – 24 are rejected. As mentioned above, Applicants are rewriting claims 1, 12 and 20, thus placing them in condition for allowance.

Claims 3 – 8 and 11 and 22 depend from claim 1. Claims 14, 18, 19 and 23 depend from claim 12. Claim 24 depends from claim 20. By virtue of these dependencies claims 3 – 8, 11, 14, 18, 19 and 22 – 24 are also in condition for allowance.

Applicants are requesting reconsideration and a withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1, 3 – 8, 11, 12, 14, 18 – 20 and 22 – 24.

In this amendment, Applicants are rewriting the independent claims to include allowable recitals from other claims. Applicants are not conceding that the subject matter encompassed by any of the claims is not patentable. Applicants are rewriting the independent claims solely to facilitate expeditious prosecution of the application. Applicants respectfully reserve the right to prosecute any of the claims previously presented, and additional claims, in one or more continuing applications.

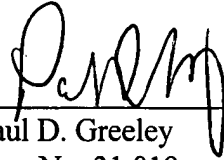
In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that all claims presented in this application patentably distinguish over the prior art. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request favorable consideration and that this application be passed to allowance.

Since this amendment neither raises new issues nor requires further consideration, entry is respectfully solicited. If the Examiner deems that the present amendment does not place the application in condition for allowance, Applicants respectfully request that it be entered for the purpose of appeal.

Respectfully submitted,

Date

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